2004-2005

Thursday, October14, 2004
8 pm, MacMillan Theatre

University of Toronto
Faculty of Music
presents

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO WIND ENSEMBLE

Agnes Grossmann, conductor

Music for the Royal Fireworks — Georg Frideric Handel (1685-1759)
- Ouverture
- Bourrée
- La Réjouissance
- Menuet I and II

Serenade for Winds in D minor. Op. 44 — Antonin Dvorak (1841-1904)
- Moderato, quasi marcia
- Minuetto
- Andante con moto
- Finale

INTERMISSION

Pictures at an Exhibition — Modest Mussorgsky (1839-1881)
- Promenade
- 1. Gnomus
- Promenade
- 2. The Old Castle
- Promenade
- 3. Tuileries (Children Quarrelling at Play)
- 4. Bydlo
- Promenade
- 5. Ballet of the Unhatched Chickens
- 6. Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle
- Promenade
- 7. The Marketplace at Limoges
- 8. Catacombae (Sepulcrum Romanum)
- Con mortuis in lingua mortua
- 9. Hut on Fowl's Legs (Baba-Yaga)
- 10. The Great Gate of Kiev

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Program Notes

Royal Fireworks Music
GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL
Born in Halle, Germany, 1685
Died in London, 1759

By 1749 George Frideric Handel had been living in England for 38 years. At the age of 64 he was the most esteemed composer in the land, and had achieved enormous success as a composer of opera, oratorio, choral and instrumental music. So it is not surprising that when the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle of 1749 officially brought the War of the Austrian Succession to a close, King George II looked to Handel to compose a new work in celebration of peace and victory. This new work received its premiere at a fireworks display on April 27 at London's Green Park.

For this occasion, Handel's new composition was billed as "an Overture of Warlike Instruments," with wind instruments, long associated with the military, dominating the piece. Indeed, Handel's original intention was to score this work entirely for winds: an unusual combination of 9 trumpets, 9 horns, 24 oboes, 12 bassoons and 3 timpani. Before the premiere, however, the composer added strings – possibly in order to render the work suitable for subsequent performances in indoor venues.

The *Royal Fireworks Music* is a suite in six movements. The first movement is a slightly modified French overture, beginning with stately dotted rhythms, and continuing with a quick and lively section, in which Handel playfully contrasts instrumental timbres. A return to dotted rhythms, this time in a minor key, is followed by a recapitulation of the lively material. The second movement is a perky Bourée, which leads to "La Paix" ("Peace"), a graceful and pastoral Sicilienne. This, in turn, is followed by "La Réjouissance" ("Rejoicing"), a festive and boisterous piece that prominently features the timpani. Two connected Minuets conclude the suite: one ostentatious, the other delicate.

Once again, Handel's keen understanding of English musical taste did not fail him: his *Royal Fireworks Music* enjoyed great popularity. A public rehearsal of the suite in Vauxhall Gardens attracted so many listeners that the event caused a traffic jam on London Bridge. And at the work's official premiere it was hailed as an enormous success – despite an accident at the concert that led to the premature explosion of the evening's fireworks display.

Pictures at an Exhibition
MODEST PETROVICH MUSSORGSKY
Born in Karevo, Russia, 1839
Died in St. Petersburg 1881

Modest Mussorgsky was born into a land-owning family, and his talent as a musician was encouraged by his mother, who took him to St. Petersburg at the age of 10 for piano lessons. However, the dissolution of his family's estate, when Mussorgsky was in his early 20s, obliged him to seek gainful employment, and for the rest of his short life he held several positions within the Russian civil service. (Like most of the "Mighty Five" Russian composers, he was never a professional musician.)

Mussorgsky always felt that his musical training was inadequate: he was often unable to finish compositions, and frequently appealed to his friend, Rimsky-Korsakov, for assistance with his scores. The only opera that Mussorgsky managed to complete in his lifetime was his *Boris Godunov*, which was staged in St. Petersburg in January 1874, to great popular success. However, the project had

taken him an exhausting five years, and following its premiere he turned to smaller forms. In the summer of 1874 he wrote a song-cycle, and also a suite of piano pieces entitled *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

The story behind this work is well known: 10 of its 16 movements are musical impressions of illustrations by Victor Hartman, a theatrical designer and friend to the composer, who had died one year earlier. The remaining six "promenade" movements are intended to portray, in various ways, the presence of the viewer moving from one set of pictures to the next. (Less well known is the fact that Mussorgsky conceived of himself as the viewer, making the theme a kind of musical self-portrait.)

Pictures at an Exhibition is an excellent example of 19th-century programmatic music, and Mussorgsky uses the full range of the piano's textures and colours to translate Hartman's pictures into sound. Some movements can be described as light and airy (such as "Limoges" and "Tuileries"), and others as dark and weighty ("The Old Castle," "Bydlo" and "Catacombs"), while still others defy simple categorization. "The Gnome" is grotesque, "Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks" is a delightful parody of dance music, and there's even a touch of klezmer in "Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuÿle." The penultimate movement – the wonderfully bizarre "Hut on Fowl's Legs (Baba-Yaga)" – leads directly into "The Great Gate of Kiev," a grandiose finale that envelopes the promenade theme in rich, glorious chords.

This suite was little known before Maurice Ravel arranged it for symphony orchestra in 1922. Tonight's arrangement for symphonic band is by Mark Hindsley, who taught at both Indiana University and the University of Illinois, before his death in 1999.

Serenade for Winds in D Minor Op. 44
ANTONÍN DVORAK
Born in Nelahozeves (Mühlhausen)
Bohemia, 1841
Died in Prague 1904

The son of a butcher and innkeeper, Antonín Dvorak excelled at the piano and violin as a child. He further developed his talents in Prague, where he studied church music, played in the Opera orchestra under Bedrich Smetana, and composed prolifically. From his pen poured symphonies, operas, chamber music and sacred music – and the busy composer rose to national attention when his *Symphony No. 3* was performed under Smetana's baton in 1874. The following year, Dvorak won the Austrian State Prize for Composition and, with the help of Johannes Brahms, soon secured a publishing contract with the prestigious firm of Simrock.

Dvorak composed this *Serenade for Winds* in 1878, two years after the premiere of his *Serenade for Strings*. In its original version, this four-movement wind serenade is scored for pairs of oboes, clarinets and bassoons, a contrabassoon, three horns, cello and bass – recalling the bucolic serenades of Mozart and other 18th-century composers who wrote music for outdoor entertainments. Like these serenades from a bygone era, Dvorak's work begins with a march – a charming piece that the composer apparently wrote in a single day. The second movement, however, is more inspired by Czech folk music than any classical model: its opening and closing sections are based on the Sousedská folk-dance, while the central section has the distinctive syncopations of a Furiant. The contrasting third movement is sweet and lyrical, although not without a sense of tension in its middle section. And the final movement is a miniature suite of dances that returns,

towards its conclusion, to the march theme that began the serenade.

The *Serenade for Winds* was premiered at an all-Dvorak concert at Prague's Provisional Theatre on November 17, 1878, with the composer conducting, and was subsequently published by Simrock in Berlin, in both full score and piano four-hands editions. The work bears a dedication to the music critic Louis Ehlert, who did much to popularize the Czech composer in Germany.

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Biography

"Acclaimed conductor with whom music has regained its rightful place, the first" (J.J. van Vlasselaer), **Agnes Grossmann** has been, in the twenty year span of her conducting career, Artistic Director of several illustrious organizations: Wiener Singakademie (1983-1986), Chamber Players of Toronto (1984-1990), Orchestre et Choeurs Metropolitain de Montreal (1986-1995), Orford Arts Centre (1989-1995), Principal Guest Conductor of ProCoro Canada, Edmonton, Alberta (1995-1997), and the Vienna Choir Boys (1996-1998).

In addition, she has guest conducted orchestras and choirs in Canada, Japan, and Europe, including the Orchestras of Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary, Canadian Chamber Ensemble, the National Arts Center Orchestra in Ottawa and the Jeunesses Musicales World Youth Orchestra, the Arcadia Orchestra and Choir in Osaka, Japan, the Osaka Philharmonic, the Salzburg Mozarteum Orchestra and the Vienna Chamber Orchestra.

Agnes Grossmann started her career as a pianist touring the USA, Canada, Europe, the Middle East and Japan with Columbia Artists Management. In 1972 she won the Mozart Interpretation Prize in Vienna. As the result of a hand injury Ms. Grossmann was forced to abandon her pianistic career, and she soon turned her attention to conducting. Since that time, "Her profound, inborn musicianship and irresistible temperament" (Gerhard Rosenthaler, Vienna), has had her conquering her public wherever she has concertized. By 1987, the City of Montreal named her "Woman of the Year in the Arts". Ms. Grossmann has received many honors since that time, including the Silver Cross for Outstanding Achievements in the Arts from the Austrian Government in 1992; an Honorary Doctorate from Mount St. Vincent University, Halifax, Nova Scotia; and the Golden Cross of the City of Vienna in 1995.

In 1996, she was appointed Artistic Director of the Vienna Choir Boys. Within a year, following the 500th Anniversary Concert with the Vienna Chamber Orchestra and the Chorus Viennensis in the Golden Hall of the Vienna Musikverein, had "Kurier" critic Franz Endler exclaim "At last, finally we could hear that the Vienna Choir Boys is flourishing once again." Agnes Grossmann rounded off the celebrations with a resoundingly successful tour of the major North American concert halls including New York's Carnegie Hall, Boston's Symphony Hall and Washington's Kennedy Centre among others, thus "reclaiming the reputation of this organization to one of the highest order" (Gerhard Kramer, Die Presse, Vienna). She launched the Children's Opera Series of the Vienna State Opera by conducting Krasa's *Brundibar*. Her educational reforms for the Institution included acceptance of girls in the kindergarten, which created a worldwide positive echo. She introduced a comprehensive educational program for the children. In November 1998, she relinquished her

position as Artistic Director of the Vienna Choir Boys because of the growing incompatibility with the Board of Directors on the method of financing and the goals of the Institution.

As of 1999, Agnes Grossmann resumed her international guest conducting career, conducting performances with ProCoro Canada (Edmonton), Arcadia Chamber Orchestra and Choir (Osaka, Japan), and a highly successful debut with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra for whom she conducted the Mozart Requiem and Handel's *Messiah*. In October 1999, she was asked to resume the Artistic Directorship of the Orford Arts Center, Canada's oldest and most prestigious Summer Academy and Music Festival. Agnes Grossmann plans and organizes this eight week Festival of Music, where she also conducts numerous operatic and concert performances.

Ever since 1989, Agnes Grossmann has returned to the podium of the Arcadia Chamber Orchestra and Chorus (Osaka) annually, conducting major sacred and secular choral works as well as orchestral concerts. In 1999, she made her debut with the Contemporary Chamber Orchestra and Choir of Taipei, Taiwan.

In 2001, she founded Ensemble Montreal which consists of a professional choir and orchestra, whose debut performance with Haydn's *Creation* was nominated for a Prix Opus of the Quebec Council of Music in the category "Best Concert of the 2000-2001 season" in the Province of Quebec. This concert was a final triumphant performance of the Orford Arts Center's 50th Anniversary Celebration. Another major event for this occasion, was the performances of the Hofmannsthal/R. Strauss adaptation of Moliere's *Bourgeois Gentilhomme* with Strauss's incidental music and ending with the opera *Ariadne auf Naxos*. Highlight of the 2002 season was the performances of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* which Agnes Grossmann conducted with Albert Millaire directing. This was a production of the Orford Opera Studio she directs. In Osaka, she performed Mozart's C Minor Mass with the participation of Ensemble Montreal Choristers joining Arcadia Chamber Choir and Orchestra in Izumi Hall. In December, she conducted a New Year's concert live on Radio Canada from Montreal.

In 2003 Ms. Grossmann performed a concert of Haydn's *Seasons* and his rarely performed *Stabat Mater* with Ensemble Montreal. The latter was recorded and broadcast by the CBC. In Orford, she conducted a production of Rossini's *La Cenerentola* and a full theatrical production of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with Mendelssohn's incidental music. In 2003-04, she conducted Mozart's *Cosi fan tutte* at the University of Toronto Faculty of Music Opera Division. In addition, she presented Ensemble Montreal at the Steirische Herbst in Graz, Austria, as part of the festivities marking the city's tenure as European Cultural Capital.

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UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO WIND ENSEMBLE

Agnes Grossmann, conductor

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Izabella Budai

Flute
Emma Elkinson
Jiajia Li
Hannah Rahimi
Lynn Tucker

Oboe
Yitan Chen
Christy Germscheid
Tess Menet

Clarinet
Thomas Grant
Tun Man Ho
Katie Norman
Nina Penner
Peter Pinteric
Jovanna Rosic
John David Williams

Bass Clarinet
Katie Norman

Bassoon
Lance McMillan
Devin Wesley

Saxophone
Tristen DeBorba, *alto*
Allison Prole, *baritone*
Becky Simpson, *tenor*
Jamie Wilkie, *alto*

Horn
Jason Austin
James Gass
Adam Gaw
Karina Hueber
Stephanie Perry

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Steve Abra
Jeff Bryant
Kathleen Heap
Stephen Hum
Colin Medeiros
Jason Young

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Meaghan Allen
Cameron Rawlins

Tuba
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Frank Law

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Dan Cameron
Dan Morphy
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Tricia Sautner
Amie Watson

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Dan Morphy

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Caroline Debono

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MacMillan Theatre
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Upcoming concert featuring the Wind Ensemble
Thursday, November 25, 2004
8 pm. MacMillan Theatre
Canadian Ecstasy - Works by Chan, Kucharzyk, Cable and Kulesha

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